

CABINET DOOR WITH CHANGEABLE DECORATIVE PANEL

Field of the Invention

This invention relates to decorative panels for placement on cabinet doors and more particularly to removable fabric panels which may be installed on wooden cabinet doors.

Background of the Invention

One of the most common structures for cabinet doors, and particularly doors for kitchen cabinets, comprises an outer rectangular frame and a central panel supported by and connected to the frame. The central frame lends itself to use as a location for placement of a decorative display, which may be a component of an overall decorative scheme. A desired feature for a decorative center panel location would be a capability of the panel for being easily installed, removed and replaced without damaging or marring the structure. This would enable use of selected decorative materials for special occasions or with changes of the seasons.

Modifications of center panel structure to obtain decorative variety have been made previously, with rigid, slideably installed panels being substituted for or used in addition to existing panels. It is desired to provide replacement panels in the form of flexible fabric which may be readily installed and removed without use of any tools.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to a cabinet door assembly including a frame made up of an upper member, a lower member and left and right side members surrounding an open center space, a fabric panel covering the open space and removably connected to the frame, and upper and lower tensioning dowel pins placed in upper and lower loops of the fabric panel. The upper frame member has a slot which extends through this member and is accessible to receiving the fabric and upper dowel pin from above. This slot is narrowed along its lower side in order to secure the upper dowel pin in place when installed. The lower frame member is made accessible to receiving the lower fabric loop and lower dowel pin from the side. In order to allow the panel to follow a straight path in the lower member when installed, the upper half on the back side of this member has a one-half portion of its thickness removed, except at each end where projecting corners are retained to secure the lower dowel pin in place when installed. Each of the ends of the lower dowel pin is positioned to be pulled tight underneath a protruding corner when tension force is applied against the fabric panel. Each of the side members is provided with a narrow slot along its inner side to receive an outer edge area of the panel and secure it in place.

The fabric panel, when installed as indicated, provides a neat and orderly appearance, and very little of its structural and support features

are visible. The top connection is completely out of sight, and the bottom one is can be seen only when the cabinet door is open.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a cabinet door assembly embodying the invention, taken from the front side.

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of the assembly, taken from the rear side.

Fig. 3 is an exploded view of the assembly, taken from the front.

Fig. 4 is a front elevational view of the door, with internal features shown in dashed lines.

Fig. 5 is a top view of the door showing the upper dowel pin and slot.

Fig. 6 is a side view with a slot shown in dashed lines.

Fig. 7 is a sectional view taken along line 7-7 Of Fig. 4.

Fig. 8 is a sectional view taken across a portion of lower member 18 along line 8-8.

Fig. 9 is a sectional view taken across line 9-9 of Fig. 4.

Fig. 10 is a sectional view taken across line 10-10 of Fig. 4.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to Fig. 1 of the drawings, there is shown a a cabinet door 10 with a fabric panel according to the invention. The door is provided with a pair of hinges 12 for mounting on cabinet framework (not shown) and a knob 14 to facilitate opening. The door has an upper frame member 16, a lower member 18, a left side member 20 and a right side

member 22. As shown in Fig. 3, fabric panel 24 has an upper loop 26 across the top and a lower loop 28 across the bottom of the panel. These loops, which may be formed by stitching, are adapted to receive an upper dowel pin 32 and a lower dowel pin 33. The dowel pins enable the panel to be stretched tight by tension when installed as directed. Side members 20 and 22 each have a slot 36, 39 (Fig. 4) extending along the length of the member at its inside edge, the slots serving to hold side edge portions of the panels in place when installed. Upper member 16 has an elongated slot 30 along its length at the upper edge for receiving upper dowel pin 32.

As shown in Figs. 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10, bottom member 18 is provided with features enabling bottom dowel pin 33 to be placed in side slot 34 at each end area of this dowel pin (Fig. 8). The middle portion of 46 of member 18, corresponding in length with the width of panel 24, has the upper half of its thickness 46 removed (Fig. 10) to enable the lower end of the panel to be held in the same plane as the rest of the panel when installed. At ends of the lower dowel pin 33, and past side edges of the panel, none of the thickness of member 18 is removed, leaving projecting corner areas 42, 44 under which each end of the dowel pin may be secured.

Fig. 5 and Fig. 7 show top slot 30 in upper frame member 16 in which upper dowel pin 32 carried in upper loop 26 of the panel 24 is located. The slot is narrowed below the dowel pin so that only the panel

fabric 24 passes all the way through the slot, while the dowel pin is restrained.

Fig. 6 shows the top dowel pin 32 inserted from the top and secured in top slot 30, while bottom dowel pin 33 is inserted from the side in slot 34 which extends perpendicular to the plane of the panel.

Fig. 9 shows a slot 36 on the inside of side member 22, this slot receiving an edge area of the panel fabric and keeping the edge of the fabric in straight alignment.

Fig. 10 indicates that the portion of the outside of lower member 18 is removed, except for end areas, leaving a void space 46 and allowing the fabric panel between end areas to be aligned in the same plane as upper portions of the panel.

In modifying a conventional cabinet door to include the features required for the present invention a preferred approach is to use a router to cut the necessary slots and to remove the necessary thickness of wood in the lower frame member as described. Such features could also be incorporated into newly manufactured doors.

While the invention is described with reference to a specific embodiment, it is not to be understood as being limited to this embodiment, but is limited only as provided by the appended claims. For example, the fabric panel may be installed by pulling it upward over the open space, with the necessary slots being placed in reversed positions. Also the panel could be installed by being pulled horizontally

instead of vertically, which would require different placement of the necessary slots.